

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 5655

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINS, PEBR, CG
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLITICAL REFORMS AS CONDITION
FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO GOZ

REF KINSHASA 5309

1. SUMMARY: I STRONGLY BELIEVE THE US AND OTHER DONOR GOVERNMENTS SHOULD INSIST ON IMPORTANT POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC AND MILITARY REFORMS AS A CONDITION FOR INCREASED ASSISTANCE; IF WE DO NOT, THE MOBUTU REGIME IS LIKELY TO FALL AND, WHEN IT DOES, THE DAMAGE TO US AND WESTERN INTERESTS WILL BE EVEN GREATER BY VIRTUE OF OUR HAVING COMMITTED MORE OF OUR RESOURCES AND PRESTIGE TO THE REGIME. THIS MESSAGE CONTAINS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC POLITICAL REFORMS WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO START THE PROCESS OF REINTEGRATING SHABA INTO THE NATIONAL FABRIC, AND TO IMPLEMENT MOBUTU'S ANNOUNCED PROGRAM OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION BY GIVING CERTAIN EXISTING INSTITUTIONS A GREATER DEGREE OF AUTONOMY. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE DISCUSSION OF POLICY OPTIONS REFTEL I WARNED THAT THE KOLWEZI DISASTER AND ITS AFTERMATH WOULD SERVE TO INCREASE FURTHER THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES ON THE MOBUTU REGIME; AND THAT, UNLESS THERE WERE URGENT POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC AND MILITARY REFORMS, THE REGIME WOULD HAVE TO RESORT INCREASINGLY TO REPRESSION AND WOULD EVENTUALLY FALL. HAVING EXCLUDED THE OPTION

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OF ACTIVELY SEEKING THE REGIME'S DEMISE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH RISKS THIS WOULD SENTAIL FOR ANARCHY AND THE EVENTUAL EXERGENCE OF A NEW REGIME HOSTILE TO OUR INTERESTS, I AT THE SAME TIME EXCLUDE THE OPTION OF NEW ASSISTANCE WITHOUT REFORMS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIS WILL LIKELY LEAD TO A POLITICAL UPHEAVAL OF EVEN DEEPER DIMENSIONS WITH US INTERESTS ULTIMATELY EXPOSED TO EVEN GREATER DAMAGE. WHAT WE MUST DO, THEN, IS TRY TO PREVENT A POLITICAL COLLAPSE OF THE

MOBUTU REGIME IN THE NEAR TERM IN ORDER TO BUY ENOUGH TIME TO SHORE UP THE COUNTRY'S DEFENSES AND SALVAGE ITS ECONOMY. BUT I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT EVEN THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED UNLESS MOBUTU TAKES IMMEDIATE STEPS TO DEFUSE THE POPULAR DISCONTENT WHICH HAS BEEN STEADILY BUILDING UP AND WHICH RISKS GETTING OUT OF HAND AS A RESULT OF WORSENING CONDITIONS IN THE WAKE OF KOLWEZI.

3. THE NEAR-TERM POLITICAL REFORMS I CONSIDER NECESSARY TO THIS PROCESS OF DEFUSION RELATE TO: (A) GETTING A START ON REINTEGRATING SHABA INTO ZAIRE'S BODY POLITIC BY REVERSING THE CURRENT TREND TOWARD GREATER REPRESSION AND SALIENATION IN FAVOR OF RECONCILIATION; (B) EFFECTING POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION BY REVITALIZING THE INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT, BEGINNING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

4. THE SHABA PROBLEM, HISTORICALLY THE MOST PERSISTENT CHALLENGE TO CENTRAL AUTHORITY IN ZAIRE, HAS BEEN SEVERELY EXACERBATED SINCE THE KATANGANS HAVE BEGUN ATTACKING FROM THEIR NEW-FOUND BASE OF OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA. MOBUTU'S REACTION HAS BEEN IN EFFECT TO DECLARE ANYONE FROM THE AREA -- MOST NOTABLY THE LUNDA TRIBESMEN WHO INHABIT THE BORDER REGION -- TO BE SUSPECT AND THEREFORE SUBJECT TO REPRESSION. HENCE BEFORE KOLWEZI WE WITNESSED THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF A NUMBER OF ALLEGED PLOTTERS FROM THE SHABA REGION, FOLLOWED BY A MASSIVE PURGE OF THEIR NUMBERS FROM THE OFFICER RANKS OF FAZ. NOW, AFTER KOLWEZI, MOBUTU SHOWS EVERY SIGN OF TURNING WESTERN SHABA INTO A ZONE OF HARSH OCCUPATION WHICH WILL ONLY SERVE
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TO DEEPEN THE POPULATION'S RESENTMENT OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND IN THE LONG RUN LESSEN KINSHASA'S CHANCES FOR RETAINING CONTROL OVER THIS VITAL PART OF THE COUNTRY.

5. WE WILL SHORTLY BE SUGGESTING POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR RESOLVING THE SHABA PROBLEM, WHICH OBVIOUSLY WILL BE A LONG AND DIFFICULT PROCESS. HOWEVER, MOBUTU SHOULD TAKE THE FIRST STEPS NOW BY PUBLICLY ANNOUNCING THAT (A) NO REPRISALS WILL BE AUTHORIZED AGAINST THE LUNDA OR ANY OTHER POPULATION GROUP IN SYABA; (B) ALL OFFICERS FROM SHABA AND KASAI DISMISSED DURING THE APRIL PURGE WILL BE REINTEGRATED INTO THE MILITARY SERVICES; AND (C) THE GOZ-IMPOSED FREEZE ON HIRING SHABANS AND KASAIANS AT GECAMINES WILL BE TERMINATED. I WOULD ALSO RECOMMEND MOBUTU'S ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL RESETTLEMENT FUND FOR ZAIRIAN REFUGEES AND/OR FLNC MEMBERS WHO WISH TO RETURN TO SHABA, INCLUDING A DONATION FROM HIS PERSONAL FUNDS AS A GESTURE OF SACRIFICE AND GOOD WILL. LATER, A FORUM SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED WHERE MOBUTU OR HIS DELEGATED DEPUTY COULD DISCUSS WITH SHABAN MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROPOSALS FOR REVERSING THE PROCESS OF GROWING POLITICAL ALIENATION IN SHABA, BUILDING SUPPORT FOR THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THEREBY UNDERCUTTING THE FLNC'S APPEAL, AND EVENTUALLY REINTEGRATING FLNC MEMBERS INTO ZAIRIAN SOCIETY.

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6. AS FOR POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION ON A NATIONAL SCALE, MOBUTU SHOULD
START BY TAKING STEPS TO GRANT MORE AUTONOMY AND AUTHORITY TO BOTH TH
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PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. MOBUTU WOULD
MAKE CLEAR THAT IN VIEW OF THE MANY NEW PROBLEMS FACING THE GOVERN-
MENT HE WILL HENCEFORTH RELY MORE HEAVILY ON THE PRIM MINISTER
FOR THE EXECUTION OF DAILY BUSINESS (INCLUDING, FOR EXAMPLE,
PRESIDING REGULARLY OVER EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS); AND THAT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS WOULD EXERCISE NEW POWERS, SUCH AS THE
RIGHT TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUE (E.G., THE SHABA INVASION) THEY DEEM
IMPORTANT, TO SELECT THEIR OWN COUNCIL PRESIDENT (WHO HERETOFORE
HAS BEEN NAMED BY MOBUTU), TO HAVE ASSURANCES OF FREEDOM FROM
INTIMIDATION BY CND (SECURITY POLICE) OR OTHER GOZ OFFICIALS, AND TO
APPROVE CHANGES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

7. AS A COROLLARY TO THESE STEPS TOWARD POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION,
AND AS A GESTURE WHICH WOULD BE WIDELY APPRECIATED AS A BLOW
AGAINST THE MOST PROMINENT AND RESENTED OF ALL SYMBOLS OF HIGH-
LEVEL CORRUPTION, MOBUTU COULD HAVE HIS UNCLE LITHO RESIGN FROM BOTH
THE POLITICAL BUREAU AND THE PRESIDENCY OF THE PARA-STATAL
TRADING COMPANY SGA IN ORDER TO TAKE UP AN AMBASSADORSHIP ABROAD.

8. THE SUGGESTIONS ABOVE ARE INTENDED TO BE ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE
KIND OF REFORM STEPS I BELIEVE ARE NECESSARY, RATHER THAN A SPECIFIC
FORMULA FOR ACTION. IT IS OF COURSE ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT,

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WERE HE TO AGREE TO FOLLOW THIS COURSE, MOBUTU WOULD HAVE OTHER AND PERHAPS MORE EFFECTIVE IDEAS THAT WOULD ACCOMPLISH THE SAME OBJECTIVES. NOR DO I HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS CONCERNING THE OBSTACLES TO MOVING AHEAD IN THIS MOST SENSITIVE OF ALL AREAS. FIRST WILL BE THE CHALLENGE OF OBTAINING AGREEMENT OF THE FRENCH, BELGIANS AND OTHER DONOR GOVERNMENTS. ON THIS SCORE I SHOULD NOTE THAT DURING OUR ALMOST DAILY INFORMAL GET-TOGETHERS THE FRENCH, BELGIAN, BRITISH AMBASSADORS AND I HAVE FRANKLY DISCUSSED POLITICAL REFORM AND ALL BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE MADE AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR THE ASSISTANCE OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS WILL BE ASKED TO EXTEND TO ZAIRE. WE HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED THE TACTICAL ASPECTS OF HOW MOBUTU COULD BEST BE BROUGHT ON BOARD. HERE THERE SEEMS TO BE A CONSENSUS THAT BISENGIMANA, FORMER PRESIDENCY DIRECTOR AND CONFIDANT OF MOBUTU WHO HAS NOW BEEN BROUGHT BACK TO HEAD UP GOZ PREPARATIONS FOR NEGOTIATING NEW MULTILATERAL AID, COULD PLAY A USEFUL ROLE. WE ALSO AGREE THAT SOME KIND OF WRITTEN COMMITMENT TO UNDERTAKE SERIOUS POLITICAL REFORMS SHOULD BE OBTAINED FROM MOBUTU --PERHAPS A CONFIDENTIAL EXCHANGE OF LETTERS AMONG THE CHIEFS OF STATE OF ZAIRE, BELGIUM, FRANCE AND THE US. THE TRICK WOULD BE NOT ONLY TO GET FROM MOBUTU A FORMAL COMMITMENT WHICH WE COULD USE FOR FUTURE LEVERAGE IF NEEDED, BUT TO FIND WAYS OF ALLOWING MOBUTU TO PRESENT REFORM AS HIS INITIATIVE RATHER THAN THE RESULT OF FOREIGN PRESSURES.

9. AN ADDITIONAL WAY OF BRINGING MOBUTU AROUND WOULD BE FOR THOSE OTHER GOVERNMENTS BEING ASKED TO ASSIST IN SHABA'S DEFENSE BY SUPPLYING TROOPS, EQUIPMENT OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO STIPULATE THAT REFORMS -- POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY -- ARE A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR THEIR HELP AS WELL. THE MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR HERE TELLS ME THAT THIS IS A MAJOR CONCERN OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND ONE THAT HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED TO MOBUTU DURING HIS TALKS WITH THE GOM, INCLUDING THOSE EARLIER THIS WEEK IN RABAT.

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THE SAUDIS SHOULD BE IN A PARTICULARLY GOOD POSITION TO EXERCISE INFLUENCE IN THIS REGARD.

10. OBVIOUSLY ALL OF THIS HAS TO BE HANDLED WITH THE UTMOST DISCRETION. BUT WE MAY NEVER AGAIN BE IN AS ADVANTAGEOUS A POSITION TO INDUCE THE KIND OF CHANGES HERE WHICH I REGARD AS ESSENTIAL TO KEEPING THIS COUNTRY INTACT AND FAVORABLY ORIENTED TOWARD OUR INTERESTS. AS SEEN FROM HERE, THE MOST IMPORTANT -- ALTHOUGH PERHAPS MOST DIFFICULT -- PART OF THE SCENARIO WILL BE TO ACHIEVE A COMMON POSITION IN OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH ZAIRE'S OTHER FRIENDS BEFORE WE REACH THE POINT OF COMMITTING GREATER RESOURCES TO ZAIRE'S SURVIVAL.

11. MISSION IS PREPARING SEPARATE MESSAGES WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

POSSIBLE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY REFORMS

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